

Issue Paper
Project Inspector Eligibility: Qualifications for Certification

ISSUE:

The DSA is seeking changes to the project inspector eligibility criteria to strengthen construction oversight of public school projects and improve project certification.

Existing eligibility requirements are less stringent than those in similar programs such as that of the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD). Current qualification parameters emphasize construction trades experience while there are documentation and administrative duties of DSA-certified project inspectors that may not be related to such experience. Furthermore, the regulations lack definition of inspector qualifications creating uncertainties with DSA process for admittance of inspectors to certification exams.

BACKGROUND

The DSA presented its original proposal at the February 9th, 2012 meeting of the Committee and received positive feedback as well as input on the proposal. Additional written input and the Committee's discussions were incorporated into a revised draft presented on March 15, 2012.

The DSA also received a subsequent feedback in writing with a suggestion to add a qualifying criteria as an architect's, structural or civil engineers representative with experience in class 1 school construction. The DSA considered the proposal and determined that the definition of an architect's, structural or civil engineers representative is broad and may include individuals that are not involved in inspection. The DSA objective is to focus the eligibility criteria on code-enforcement inspection. The DSA proposal also contains a means for architects and engineers to qualify for a Class 3 inspector exam by having a valid license or registration.

The DSA also received requests to add requirements for continuing education for the project inspector recertification. The DSA will consider such requirements and present a proposal at a future Committee meeting.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED REGULATION CHANGES:

1. DSA proposes to outline minimum requirements for admittance to inspector exam by exam class (Project Class 1 through 4). This would provide clarity to the examination requirements and facilitate progressive certification process, i.e. junior level inspectors qualifying for Class 3 and 4 certifications prior to qualifying for Class 1 and 2 certifications.
2. DSA proposes to utilize experience in lower certification class as one of the qualifying criteria for admittance to the exam in a greater class. This process would encourage certification as Class 3 and Class 4 inspector as an entry level certification for school inspectors.
3. DSA proposal emphasizes experience in code-enforcement inspection and school construction for Class 1 and 2 certifications. Experience in trades and general construction is outlined for admittance to Class 3 and 4 exams.
4. DSA is proposing qualification requirements that would include other state or nationally-recognized inspection certifications without providing specific references, as various certification programs may change over time.

Based on the input received at the March meeting of the Committee, the DSA amended the proposal with the following provisions:

- Added the word “building” to clarify that code-enforcement inspection refers to enforcement of the building code, per the Committee’s suggestion.
- Added “non-residential construction” to the inspection experience for Class 1, 2, and 3 exam, per the Committee’s suggestion. The Class 4 eligibility requirement allows inspection of residential construction.
- Added experience as the lead project construction superintendent of OSHPD projects as a qualifier for Class 1 and 2 inspector exams per the Committee’s suggestion.
- Changed the number of years (from four to three) required for upgrading the inspector certification from Class 2 to Class 1, per stakeholder suggestion.
- Changed the number of years (from two to three) required for upgrading the inspector certification from Class 3 to Class 2 and removed the requirement for special inspector certification per stakeholder suggestion.

The DSA prepared a matrix table (attached) that summarizes the proposed qualification requirements by exam class. This table is intended to aid in the discussion of the proposal and does not replace the proposed regulation text.

PROPOSED REGULATION CHANGES**(all new text, code section numbering to be determined):****Minimum qualifications for examination.**

An applicant shall not be less than 25 years of age, possess a high school diploma or equivalent, and shall meet the following minimum qualifications:

(a) For Class 1 inspector exam, one of the following:

1. Six years of experience as an architect's, engineer's, owner's, or local building official's representative in building code-enforcement inspection of non-residential construction with a valid certification as a building inspector by a state- or nationally-recognized organization, as accepted by the DSA. [Note: Possession of a valid California registration as a structural engineer, civil engineer, or a valid California license as an architect may be substituted for four years of required experience.]; or,
2. Certification by Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development as a Class A Hospital Inspector; or,
3. Six years of qualifying experience as the lead project construction superintendent on:
 - a. new building public school construction projects subject to the requirements of Education Code sections 17280 or 81130, and these regulations; and/or,
 - b. construction of new hospital buildings as defined by Section 129725 of the Health and Safety Code;or,
4. Three years of qualifying experience as a DSA certified Class 2 project inspector and valid certification as a special inspector for steel, or concrete, or masonry construction by a state- or nationally-recognized organization, as accepted by the DSA.

(b) For Class 2 inspector exam, one of the following:

1. Four years of experience as an architect's, engineer's, owner's, or local building official's representative in building code-enforcement inspection of non-residential construction with a valid certification as a building inspector by a state- or nationally-recognized organization, as accepted by the DSA. [Note: Possession of a valid California registration as a structural engineer, civil engineer, or a valid California license as an architect may be substituted for three years of required experience.]; or,
2. Four years of qualifying experience as the lead project construction superintendent on:
 - a. new building public school construction projects subject to the requirements of Education Code sections 17280 or 81130, and these regulations; and/or,
 - b. construction of new hospital buildings as defined by Section 129725 of the Health and Safety Code;or,
3. Three years of qualifying experience as a DSA certified Class 3 project inspector.

(c) For Class 3 inspector exam, one of the following:

1. Three years of experience as an architect's, engineer's, owner's, or local building official's representative in building code-enforcement inspection of non-residential construction with a valid certification as a building inspector by a state- or nationally-recognized organization, as accepted by the DSA; or,
2. Possession of a valid California registration as a structural engineer, civil engineer, or a valid California license as an architect; or,
3. Four years of qualifying experience as the lead project construction superintendent [Note: Experience may be substituted with college education with major work in architecture, engineering, building inspection and/or construction on a year-for-year basis for a maximum of two years]; or,
4. Two years of qualifying experience as a DSA certified Class 4 project inspector and two years of college education with major work in architecture, engineering, building inspection and/or construction.

(d) For Class 4 inspector exam, one of the following:

1. Two years of experience as an architect's, engineer's, owner's, or local building official's representative in building code-enforcement inspection with a valid certification as a building inspector by a state- or nationally-recognized organization, as accepted by the DSA; or,
2. Two years of qualifying experience as the lead project construction superintendent [Note: One year of experience may be substituted with one year of college education with major work in architecture, engineering, building inspection and/or construction]; or,
3. Four years of a relevant and varied construction experience at a minimum of journeyman level [Note: Experience may be substituted with college education with major work in architecture, engineering, building inspection and/or construction on a year-for-year basis for a maximum of two years]; or,
4. Valid certification as a code-enforcement inspector by a state- or nationally-recognized organization, as accepted by the DSA, and three years of qualifying inspection experience. Certification and experience may be gained in building inspection, structural special inspection or specialty inspection, such as mechanical or electrical.

Changes from the March 15, 2012 version are indicated as underlined text (added) and strike-through text (deleted)

Exam Class	Inspection Experience (Building Code Enforcement)	Education & Licenses	Construction Experience	Experience as DSA certified project inspector	Special Inspection Certification
1	6 yrs. or 2 yrs. experience + engineer/architect license		6 yrs. Lead Project Superintendent: new school building projects <u>or</u> <u>new hospital buildings</u>	<u>3</u> 4 yrs. DSA Class 2 + masonry, steel, concrete special inspection certification	
	OSHPD Class A certification				
2	4 yrs. or 1 yr. experience + engineer/architect license		4 yrs. Lead Project Superintendent: new school building projects <u>or</u> <u>new hospital buildings</u>	<u>3</u> 2 yrs. DSA Class 3 + masonry, steel, concrete special inspection certification	
3	3 yrs.	Registered Engineer or Licensed Architect	4 yrs. Lead Project Superintendent or 2 yrs. experience + 2 yrs. education	2 yrs. DSA Class 4 + 2 yrs. Education	
4	<u>2 yrs. (including inspection of residential construction)</u>		2 yrs. Lead Project Superintendent or 1 yr experience + 2 yrs. education		Certification + 3 yrs. Experience
			4 yrs. Journeyman level or 2 yrs experience + 2 yrs education		